DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 081 480 PS 006 723

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TITLE	Assessing the Behaviors of Caregivers. ABC-I and ABC-II.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	11p.; Oversized pages, actual page count 9
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Check Lists; *Child Care Workers; Evaluation Methods; Evaluation Techniques; *Infants; Interpersonal Relationship; Program Evaluation; Social Environment; *Teacher Behavior; *Teacher Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS	Assessing the Behaviors of Caregivers I and II

ABSTRACT

Two versions of the Assessing the Behavior of Caregivers (ABC-I, ABC-II) Rating Checklist were developed. These instruments were designed to assess infant environments by studying actual ongoing behaviors, as opposed to idealized stated objectives of programs or psychometric criterion scores of the infants. The checklists were created to (1) be brief, economical instruments, easy to apply in the classroom, with high interobserver reliability; (2) provide a means of assessing whether an infant program actually provides the inputs which have been articulated as specific program goals; and (3) provide a means of reliably monitoring infant programs, thereby insuring the maintenance of quality day care. ABC-I, a 40-item checklist, focuses on behavioral areas which reflect educational goals for infants under 18 months. ABC-II, designed for use with infants from 18 to 36 months, has 44 items representing age-appropriate developmental goals. Interobserver reliability is reported to be 84% and 88% for the two checklists based on a total of 34 hours of observation. Studies are listed which have used the instruments. (DP)

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Assessing the Behaviors of Caregivers

ABC-I and ABC-II

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Introduction

In the United States, recent increases in the number of working mothers of infants and toddlers has resulted in a proliferation of a wide variety of care-giving services for children under three years. Such rapid service growth in conjunction with few efforts at assessing the educational and affective outcomes of such experience for the very young lends urgency to the need for reliable and easy-to-learn systems to monitor the quality of such programs and the effectiveness of teachers, family day-care mothers and other personnel responsible for infant care and education.

Objectives

The rating checklist (in two versions, for caregivers of younger and older infants), we have developed to measure specific caregiver behaviors with infants, with each other, and with the environment is called the "ABC" - Assessing the Behaviors of Caregivers. Purposes in creating this instrument were the following:

1. To create an assessment instrument for caregiving behaviors which would be brief, economical, easy-to-learn and to apply in the classroom, and with high inter-observer reliability.

2. To provide evidence for or non-confirmation of the extent to which teaching staff in a day care center or other care setting for infants actually provides the inputs which have been articulated as specific goals of the program.

   a. This instrument, furthermore, should be sensitive to individual teacher variations in the efficacy with which program goals are being implemented.

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3. To test the utility of such an assessment instrument as a program monitoring device to ensure the provision of a quality day care program to infants.

a. To pinpoint those specific areas where teacher outputs need to be augmented (or decreased, in the case of undesirable negative emotional responses to children).

b. To specify those data areas of teacher functioning where inservice training can be of value. The instrument, if used in a pre- and post-training design, should be able to reflect changes in teacher behaviors relative to particular areas stressed in the training program.

c. To permit specification of each individual infant with whom teacher behaviors are carried out so that any input variability due to child characteristics, such as sex, can be examined and discussed with teaching staff in the light of program goals of equality of quality of care for all infants.

Rationale

The development of ABC, then, was predicated on the importance of characterizing infant environments by ongoing behaviors. The possible misconceptions inherent in characterizing child care programs by stated or idealized goals rather than by actual content and practices have been illuminated by Katz (1970) with respect to preschool programs, and by Saunders & Keister (1972) with respect to day care home programs for infants. Zigler (1970) and others have castigated the use of child output measures alone--such as IQ scores or other narrowly cognitive measures-- as reflectors of program efficacy.

Checklist Description

Items for the ABC behavioral categories reflect the program goals of the Syracuse University Children's Center, a program for infants which is predicated on Eriksonian, Piagetian, and language development principles. ABC items were culled from the Children's Center program goals, from the Piagetian Infancy Scales (Honig & Lally 1970), and from the more elaborate APPROACH coding system (Caldwell & Honig, 1970) which was developed several years ago at the Children's Center.

ABC-I is a 40-item checklist developed to focus on seven behavioral areas. These areas reflect the following goals for teachers of infants under 18 months:

1. Facilitation of early language in infants.
2. Positive social-emotional behaviors toward and with infants.
3. Adult negative social-emotional behaviors with infants. (Hopefully frequencies in this category will be found to be minimal.)
4. Presentation of Piagetian games and opportunities for sensori-motor learning.
5. Provision of caregiving routines (such as feeding and diapering) to infants.
6. Performance of necessary housekeeping tasks.
7. Provision of motoric and kinesthetic experiences for infants.

An eighth category "Does nothing" has been included in the checklist.

The ABC-I checklist allows a recorder to note the particular infant with whom behavior occurs. This was desirable since in the Syracuse University Children's Center each infant has his or her own special caregiver, and the adult-infant ratio is one to four. Such specificity permits a focus on the quality of program offered to all infants. Thus if there are effects of infant sex, ethnicity, linguistic background, or perhaps even type of handicap on frequency of caregiver interactions in any given domain, such effects can be easily determined.

ABC-II has been developed to reflect teacher involvement with special developmental concerns for infants from 18 months to 36 months. Since in the open education classrooms of the Children's Center, toddlers choose environments freely, and there is a fairly large group of older infants, specification of the individual infant with whom a given adult interacted was not feasible.

ABC-II is a 44-item checklist (with 5 optional additional items) which reflects the following teacher behaviors with older infants:

1. Facilitation of language development.
2. (a) Facilitation of social personal skills.
   (b) Facilitation of physical skills.
3. Facilitation of concept development.
4. Provision of social-emotional positive behaviors.
5. Use of social-emotional negative behaviors (expected to be minimal).
6. Provision of caregiving routines to the infants.
7. The performance of necessary housekeeping tasks.
8. Optional items:

   Qualitative categories reflecting teacher attention to the problem of the match, child creativity, etc.

Both checklists have an additional "Do Nothing" category. Copies of both checklists ABC-I and ABC-II are appended to this booklet.

Administration

The ABC scale is administered by stationing an observer in the classroom. The observer tallies the first clear example of any ABC scale behavior which a designated caregiver emits during a two-minute rating period. This tally is repeated for three more two-minute periods. The observer rests for two minutes, then rates again for four more two-minute periods. This ten-minute cycle is repeated three times in a half-hour of recording behaviors of a single caregiver. This procedure allows for a maximum of 12 tallies for any given behavioral item during the half-hour rating session.

After this half-hour, the observer switches to another caregiver and rates two-minute samples of behavior in the same fashion for another half-hour session.

Since ABC-I permits specification of a particular infant in a teacher's care, an alternative procedure may be followed for ABC-I. The observer tallies each first occurrence of a specific behavior with each infant in a teacher's care during each 2-minute rating interval. Data coding can then be arranged to determine both 1) whether a given adult behavior was emitted at all during a two-minute rating period, and 2) whether one infant or another seems to receive markedly more or less of specified adult inputs.

If this alternative procedure is followed, then the ABC-I checklist sheet, as appended, serves for only one ten-minute rating period. In order to provide spaces for a full half-hour of ratings, two separate sheets of grids--identical to the grid already supplied on the checklist--are stapled over the checklist grid. All three grids then provide tally spaces for four infants for 12 2-minute rating periods.

Analysis

ABC data provides frequency distributions of teacher behaviors. Teacher outputs may then be compared on the proportion of tallies recorded per total number possible. For example, if two teachers have each been observed for 10 half-hours, then 120 tallies per item are theoretically possible. If teacher I talks to a baby during 60 of the 2-minute rating periods, then she has a 50% rating $\left(\frac{60}{120} \times 100\right)$ for that behavioral item. If teacher II talks to a baby during 30 of 120 possible tallies, then his or her percentage for that item is 25%. Program directors can determine the percentage limits which they consider adequate or optimal for each adult item or for each cluster of items on the ABC checklist.

Another kind of analysis assesses the division of a teacher's total behavioral repertoire. For example, if a teacher receives X number of tallies per half hour, what percentage of these are in the area of language facilitation, or what percentage of the total consists of positive emotional behaviors with babies?

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Such an analysis, based on total behavioral output, may also be computed for morning and for afternoon assessments. This makes possible the monitoring of quality of program regardless of time of day or day of week. Such monitoring, for example, could ensure that despite afternoon fatigue, teachers provide the same proportion of positive emotional behaviors to infants in half-day afternoon care as in a half-day morning program.

Reliability

To date, 19 half-hours of interobserver ratings have been analyzed for ABC-I for two pairs of raters. The percent agreement between observers was computed per category as

$$\frac{\text{No. of agreed upon tallies}}{\text{Total possible tallies per category}} \times 100$$

Interobserver reliability for ABC-I is 84%. Reliabilities have ranged between 50 and 100% for the different categories. The three categories with consistently higher reliability scores are language inputs, positive social-emotional inputs, and caregiving inputs.

To date, fifteen half-hours of interobserver reliability ratings have been analyzed for ABC-II for two pairs of observers. The mean overall percent of agreement is 88 percent when the optional qualitative categories are excluded.

Studies Which Have Utilized the ABC Scale

1. Honig, A. S., & Lally, J. R. Assessing teacher behaviors with infants in day care. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, February 1973.

2. Honig, A. S., & Lally, J. R. Behavior profiles of experienced teachers of infants. Unpublished manuscript, Syracuse University Children's Center, 1973.

3. Honig, A. S., & Lally, J. R. Toddler-teachers: Differences between "well-trained" and "master" teachers. Unpublished manuscript, Syracuse University Children's Center, 1973.

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Caldwell, B. M., & Honig, A. S. APPROACH: A procedure for patterning responses of adults and children. Available through: Journal Supplement Abstract Service, American Psychological Association, Washington, D. C. Abstracted in Catalog of Selected Documents in Psychology, 1971, 1, 1-2.

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Katz, L. G. Children and teachers in two types of Head Start classes. Young Children, 1969, 25, 342-349.

Saunders, M. M., & Keister, M. E. Family day care: Some observations. Project report prepared for the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Grant No. D-256), University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1972.

Zigler, E. Invited address presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Miami, September 1970.

ABC-I

ASSESSING THE BEHAVIORS OF CAREGIVERS - INFANT FOLD

Caregiver's Name: _____ Rater: _____

Date_____ Day_____ Time_____

Child's Name				
2-minute Trials				
I. LANGUAGE FACILITATION				
1. Elicits vocalization				
2. Converses with child				
3. Praises, encourages verbally				
4. Offers help or solicitous remarks				
5. Inquires of child or makes requests				
6. Gives information or culture rules				
7. Provides and labels sensory experience				
8. Reads or shows pictures to child				
9. Sings to or plays music for child				
II. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: POSITIVE				
1. Smiles at child				
2. Uses raised, loving, or reassuring tones				
3. Provides physical, loving contact				
4. Plays social games with child				
5. Eye contact to draw child's attention				
III. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: NEGATIVE				
1. Criticizes verbally; scolds; threatens				
2. Forbids; negative mands				
3. Frowns, restrains physically				
4. Punishes physically				
5. Isolates child physically-behavior modif.				
6. Ignores child when child shows need for atten.				
IV. PIAGETIAN TASKS				
1. Object permanence				
2. Means and ends				
3. Imitation				
4. Causality				
5. Prehension: small-muscle skills				
6. Space				
7. New schemas				

2-minute Trials				
I. LANGUAGE FACILITATION				
1. Elicits vocalization				
2. Converses with child				
3. Praises, encourages verbally				
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1. Object permanence				
2. Means and ends				
3. Imitation				
4. Causality				
5. Prehension: small-muscle skills				
6. Space				
7. New schemas				
V. CARE-GIVING: CHILD				
1. Feeds				
2. Diapers or toilets				
3. Dresses or undresses				
4. Washes or cleans child				
5. Prepares child for sleep				
6. Physical shepherding				
7. Eye checks on child's well-being				
VI. CARE-GIVING: ENVIRONMENT				
1. Prepares food				
2. Tidies up room				
3. Helps other caregiver(s)				
VII. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT				
1. Provides kinesthetic stimulation				
2. Provides large-muscle play				
VIII. DOES NOTHING				

ABC-II

ASSESSING THE BEHAVIORS OF CAREGIVERS: FAMILY STYLE

Caregiver's name:_____ Rater:_____ Date_____ Day_____Time_____

Place_____

I. FACILITATES LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	
1. Converses	
2. Models language	
3. Expands language	
4. Praises, encourages	
5. Offers help, solicitous remarks, or makes verbal promises	
6. Inquires of child or makes request	
7. Gives information	
8. Gives culture rules	
9. Labels sensory experiences	
10. Reads or identifies pictures	
11. Sings or plays music with child	
12. Role-plays with child	
II. FACILITATES DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS	
SOCIAL; PERSONAL	
1. Promotes child-child play (cog. & sensori.)	
2. Gets social games going	
3. Promotes self-help and social responsibility	
4. Helps child recognize his own needs	
5. Helps child delay gratification	
6. Promotes persistence, attention span	
PHYSICAL:	
4. Small muscle, perceptual motor	
5. Large muscle, kinesthesis	
III. FACILITATES CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	
1. Arranges learning of space and time	
2. " " " seriation, categorization, & polar concepts	
3. " " " number	
4. " " " physical causality	
IV. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: POSITIVE:	
1. Smiles at child	
2. Uses raised, loving or reassuring tones	
3. Provides physical loving contact	
4. Uses eye contact to draw child's attention	
V. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: NEGATIVE:	
1. Criticizes verbally, scolds, threatens	
2. Forbids, negative mands	
3. Frowns, restrains physically	
4. Isolates child physically--behav. mod.	
5. Ignores child when child shows need for attention	
6. Punishes physically	

4. Praises, encourages	
5. Offers help, solicitous remarks, or makes verbal promises	
6. Inquires of child or makes request	
7. Gives information	
8. Gives culture rules	
9. Labels sensory experiences	
10. Reads or identifies pictures	
11. Sings or plays music with child	
12. Role-plays with child	
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SOCIAL; PERSONAL	
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1. Arranges learning of space and time	
2. " " " seriation, categorization, & polar concepts	
3. " " " number	
4. " " " physical causality	
IV. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: POSITIVE:	
1. Smiles at child	
2. Uses raised, loving or reassuring tones	
3. Provides physical loving contact	
4. Uses eye contact to draw child's attention	
V. SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: NEGATIVE:	
1. Criticizes verbally, scolds, threatens	
2. Forbids, negative mands	
3. Frowns, restrains physically	
4. Isolates child physically--behav. mod.	
5. Ignores child when child shows need for attention	
6. Punishes physically	
7. Gives attention to negative behavior which should be ignored	
VI. CAREGIVING - BABY:	
1. Diapers, toilets, dresses, washes, cleans	
2. Gives physical help, helps to sleep, shepherds	
3. Eye-checks on child's well-being	
4. Carries child	
VII. CARE-GIVING: ENVIRONMENT	
1. Prepares/serves food	
2. Tidies up room	
3. Helps other caregiver	
4. Prepares activities, arranges environment to stimulate child	
VIII. QUALITATIVE CATEGORIES:	
1. Encourages creative expression	
2. Matches "tempo" and/or developmental level of child	
3. Actively engages child's interest in activity or activity choice	
5. Follows through on requests, promises, directions, discipline	
IX. DOES NOTHING	

Use red pencil to tally caregiver behavior with boys
Use black pencil to tally caregiver behavior with girls